

December 8, 2016

The December 8, 2016 meeting of the Mansfield Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chair Ruth Pante, held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act of 1976, followed by a pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Present: Ruth Pante, Glenn Todd, James McMekin, Dawn Smith; also Township Committeeman Joseph Watters

Absent: Robert Jewell, Elaine Drazek

Minutes

It was MOVED by Mr. McMekin to accept and approve the minutes of the November 10, 2016 meeting, seconded by Mr. Todd. All in favor with one abstention (Ms. Smith was absent).

Budget

The \$7,000 in 2016 Environmental Commission budget has been removed because it was not used or allocated. Ms. Smith asked if we can apply again for a grant for \$10,000 to pursue an update to the Environmental Resource Inventory. The amount of the estimate as submitted by Ali Vaezi's firm is unknown; however, his firm has a conflict of interest. Mr. Watters reminded that Mansfield has paid for reassessment; the tax maps were last updated in 2011 and it was expensive; they are now out of date. Ms. Smith asked if there is a way to get updated tax information without investing thousands of dollars, but Mr. Watters knows no way. Ms. Smith said this is either state run or available through the state to gain access to the information. Mr. Watters recalled the last update was done by Drew DeSessa and cost about \$6,000.

Besides Green Acres, what percentage of Mansfield is government owned? The Morris Canal is probably 30 percent and this 30 percent more likely includes County land; this does not include the Mt. Bethel Church which is owned by Mansfield. The solar farm has changed the town's ratables.

The botanical signs are not part of the 2017 budget. The memorial sign planned for Cafferata Park has still not been ordered, and the \$350 needed for that sign will be requested in the new budget; that sign will acknowledge the donations by Tim Terry and, at his request, will honor Wilma Stark.

Photo Contest

Ms. Smith said the first report required by the grant has been submitted; the hike planned to Pt. Mountain had to be cancelled due to the weather; and fewer responses are being received since the change of weather.

Mr. Todd asked what the state will do with the photos and what are participant rights. Ms. Smith explained that Mansfield gets permission to use the photos; there are no Green Team credits for this project; participants maintain their rights to the photos. However, she explained

that the contest rules are available to all who participate; participants should be encouraged to read them. Ms. Smith will not be participating.

Cafferata Park

Many trees are not surviving. Mr. Terry's concern is the abundance of dead wood; the trees are all still alive but stressed. The trees at the entrance have been replaced. One tree has split down the trunk with ants visible. Wait for spring to do an evaluation.

The Cub Scouts have repaired the bluebird houses and they have constructed "do not disturb" signs for hatchling protection. The bird houses will be installed the end of February and the Cub Scouts will continue to monitor them.

Environmental Discussion

The proposed meeting dates were reviewed. It was MOVED by Mr. Todd to approve the 2017 meeting dates, seconded by Ms. Smith; the dates will be published. All in favor.

Mr. Watters asked for interest and plans for 2017 of those members present. Ms. Pante was asked to contact Ms. Drazek and Mr. Jewell regarding their plans for next year.

Mr. McMekin acknowledged the passing of astronaut John Glenn.

Mr. Todd reported success with the experimental bluebird boxes; the design and concept are very different, very simple. Ms. Smith said a box that was donated was made of particle board and produced three nestings, but it did not last. A discussion ensued regarding possible use of plastic such as milk jugs.

Ms. Smith asked Mr. Watters about the current drought, whether water restrictions are in place. Mr. Watters said Mansfield has never done anything to restrict water usage, the homeowners are responsible.

It was MOVED by Mr. Todd to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Pante

**Next meeting date:
January 12, 2017**